

3.0 Policy Guidance

Issues related to policy guidance including planning requirements, eligibility, and project selection criteria are discussed in this section.

■ 3.1 Transportation Planning and Project Development

Site management plans, developed by the FLMAs, describe how sites will manage their resources, visitor use, and general development over a 10- to 20-year period. The transportation system in a site should support these overall management objectives. Therefore, the site management planning process should include a transportation planning process, and provide the genesis for transit proposals. Transit proposals developed as a part of the Gettysburg National Military Park General Management Plan, for example, addressed a variety of needs including traffic congestion, resource preservation and local business concerns.

The transportation planning processes developed under Title 23 U.S.C. 204(a) direct the FLMAs to work closely with interested parties throughout the transportation planning process. Inclusion of State and local governments, MPOs, gateway communities and others in the FLMA's planning process, including the development of site management plans, will help improve the viability of proposed transportation strategies. Cooperation with these agencies will also enable site managers to take advantage of professional transportation planning expertise available in these agencies. It is anticipated that these agencies will take the technical lead on projects of regional significance and provide technical support on projects that are more local or site-specific in nature. Personnel from FTA's regional offices, FHWA's FLH and Federal-aid division offices, and FHWA's Resource Centers are all potential sources of technical support. Each FLMA agency will need to determine how much additional technical expertise needs to be obtained internally as the program progresses.

■ 3.2 Definition and Eligibility of Capital Projects

If a Federal lands transit program is established, agreements between the U.S. DOT and the FLMAs should be developed that define and describe project eligibility for the program. The primary purpose of the projects should be the provision of public transportation services within lands managed by the NPS, the BLM, or the USFWS; or public transportation services connecting these sites to adjacent or nearby communities. It is recommended that the program funds be available to enhance or expand existing public transportation systems that already provide service in or to these sites, as well as for establishing new public transportation systems.

Title 49 U.S.C. 5302, 5307, and 5309 describe expenditures that are eligible for funding under FTA programs. Title 23 U.S.C. 204 describes the expenditures that are eligible for funding for the FLHP program. These sections in Title 49 and Title 23 can provide a basis for determining project eligibility for FLMA transit projects.

Capital projects defined in Title 49 U.S.C. 5302 include:

- A) Acquiring, constructing, supervising, or inspecting equipment or a facility for use in mass transportation, expenses incidental to the acquisition or construction, payments for the capital portion of rail trackage rights system agreements, transit-related intelligent transportation systems,;
- B) Rehabilitating a bus;
- C) Remanufacturing a bus;
- D) Overhauling rail rolling stock;
- E) Preventive maintenance;
- F) Leasing equipment or a facility for use in mass transportation, subject to regulations that the Secretary prescribes limiting the leasing arrangements to those that are more cost-effective than purchase or construction; and
- G) A mass transportation improvement that enhances economic development or incorporates private investment (a wide range of activities are defined specifically under this item).

Title 49 U.S.C. 5307 defines requirements for urbanized area formula grants. This section defines “associated capital maintenance items” to include “equipment, tires, tubes, and material, each costing at least 0.5 percent of the current fair market value of rolling stock comparable to the rolling stock for which the equipment, tires, tubes and material are to be used.”

Title 49 U.S.C. 5309 defines eligible items under Capital Grants and Loans to include:

- A) Capital projects for new fixed guideway systems, and extensions to existing fixed guideway systems, including the acquisition of real property, the initial acquisition of rolling stock for the systems, alternatives analysis related to the development of the systems and the acquisition of rights-of-way, and relocation, for fixed guideway corridor development for projects in the advanced stages of alternatives analysis or preliminary engineering;
- B) Capital projects, including property and improvements needed for an efficient and coordinated mass transportation system;
- C) The capital costs of coordinating mass transportation with other transportation;
- D) The introduction of new technology through innovative and improved products, into mass transportation;
- E) Capital projects to modernize existing fixed guideway systems;

- F) Capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities;
- G) Mass transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities; and
- H) The development of corridors to support fixed guideway systems, including protecting rights-of-way through acquisition, construction of dedicated bus and high-occupancy vehicle lanes and park and ride lots, and other non-vehicular capital improvements that the Secretary may decide would result in increase mass transportation usage in the corridor.

Title 23 U.S.C. 204 allows FLHP funds to be made available for any kind of transportation project eligible for assistance under Title 23 U.S.C. that is within or adjacent to or provides access to areas served by Federal lands highways. Projects eligible for funding under Title 23 U.S.C. 133 include capital costs for transit projects eligible for assistance under chapter 53 of Title 49. Therefore, FLHP funds are available for eligible capital costs under Title 49 U.S.C. 5302, 5307, and 5309. In addition to these transit capital projects, in Title 23 U.S.C. 204, FLHP funds are available for “the cost of transportation planning, research, engineering and construction of highways roads and parkways, or of transit facilities within public lands, national parks and Indian reservations.” Furthermore, Title 23 U.S.C. 204 allows FLHP funds to be made available for many items that can support the implementation of transit systems. The following items are specifically included in Title 23 U.S.C. 204:

- A) Transportation planning for tourism and recreational travel including the National Forest Scenic Byways Program, BLM Back Country Byways Program, National Trail System Program, and other similar Federal programs that benefit recreational development;
- B) Adjacent vehicular parking areas;
- C) Interpretive signage;
- D) Acquisition of necessary scenic easements and scenic or historic sites;
- E) Provision for pedestrians and bicycles;
- F) Construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas including sanitary and water facilities; and
- G) Other appropriate public road facilities such as visitor centers as determined by the Secretary.

In many sites it will be desirable to locate a variety of transit support facilities outside site boundaries, including items such as parking areas, maintenance facilities, and storage yards. This may be accomplished in partnership with local agencies and organizations. It would be advantageous to include language in legislation allowing funds to be used outside of site boundaries for these purposes.

■ 3.3 Operations and Maintenance Eligibility

The majority of funds for operations and maintenance should be provided from sources other than the potential federal lands transit program. While flexibility in the use of funds is desirable, the primary objective of the program is to provide for capital needs including preventive maintenance as defined by the FTA.

■ 3.4 Project Selection

Agreements developed between the U.S. DOT and the FLMAs should include general guidelines for project selection. Each agency could then develop its own set of criteria. Agency directors and administrators could make the final decision on criteria with technical staff support. The NPS, for example, uses its Choosing by Advantage (CBA) methodology to select transit projects for funding. The CBA method provides for an evaluation of project proposals under a series of broad objectives:

- Protect cultural and natural resources;
- Provide for visitor enjoyment;
- Improve efficiency of park operations; and
- Provide cost-effective, environmentally responsible, and otherwise beneficial development for the NPS.

Factors are applied under the CBA objectives to help measure the effectiveness of project proposals. Some of the specific factors that can be used include:

- Transportation impacts, including reduced traffic congestion, improved safety, improved visitor experience, and improved access to sites with limited parking;
- Resource impacts, including mitigation of automobile impacts on natural, historic and cultural resources and/or improved access to sites with limited parking and roadway facilities;
- Economic impacts from a reduced need for investment in roadway and parking facilities, and in some cases, increased visitation and spending in the local area; and
- Increased recreational opportunities for visitors.

These criteria are primarily qualitative although certain impacts, such as traffic reduction and flow, can be quantitatively estimated. Agencies may apply quantitative criteria similar to those used in the FLHP Park Roads and Parkways program process, or for FTA's New Starts program, but tailored to the specific conditions of Federal lands sites. These measures could include items such as:

- Life-cycle cost;
- Life-cycle cost/rider;
- Operations and maintenance cost/rider;
- Revenue/operations and maintenance cost;
- Total ridership;
- Total ridership/total site visitation;
- Reduction in automobile vehicle miles and/or vehicle hours of travel; and
- Reduction of pollutants.

An additional criterion important to Federal lands transit funding is the existence and viability of a long-range funding plan. Federal sites competing for funding should demonstrate the ability to raise revenues over the long term through a variety of sources, if necessary. Long-term commitments from State, regional and local agencies, as well as business and private interests will be important in determining whether an initial investment should be made.